

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 SAM-01

SAB-01 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-05 /071 W

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R 091420Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4819

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3922

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IZ

SUBJ: SIGNS OF SYRIAN INTEREST IN RECONCILIATION WITH IRAQ

REF: DAMASCUS 3674

1. FURTHER EVIDENCE HAS APPEARED OF SOME WINDING DOWN IN SYRIAN-IRAQI TENSIONS. APART FROM RETURN OF BULK OF SARG MILITARY FORCES FROM THEIR POSITIONS IN NORTHWEST TO THEIR CAMPS AROUND DAMASCUS, TWO SYRIAN MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE CALLED FOR IRAQI PARTICIPATION IN EASTERN FRONT FACING ISRAEL.

EMBEDDED IN LONG NARRATION OF OCT WAR EXPLOITS BY DEFMIN MUSTAFA TLAS, WHICH APPEARED IN LOCAL PAPERS OCT 5-6, WAS STATEMENT "THE EASTERN FRONT SHOULD INCLUDE THE CONFRONTATION STATES SYRIA, JORDAN AND LEBANON IN ADDITION TO IRAQ AND
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ANY OTHER ARAB STATES CAPABLE OF SENDING FORCES TO

THIS FRONT AS WELL AS PALESTINIANS."

2. TWO DAYS LATER MAJ. HAYTHAN AL-AYYUBI, CHIEF EDITOR OF ARAB MILITARY ENCYCLOPEDIA, ENDORSED TLAS' STATEMENT IN ARTICLE IN AL-BAATH, SAYING THAT CREATION OF AN EASTERN FRONT CONSISTING OF SYRIA, IRAQ, JORDAN, LEBANON AND PALESTINIANS WOULD HELP ATTRACT EGYPT BACK INTO RANKS OF ARAB UNITY.

3. ANOTHER PERHAPS RELATED INCIDENT IS SARG'S RECENT RELEASE FROM PRISON OF WASFI AFLAQ, BROTHER OF BAATH FOUNDER MICHAEL AFLAQ AND FORMER DEP DIRECTOR FOR WEST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. USUALLY WELL-INFORMED SYRIAN SOURCE TOLD US OCT 9 THAT AF CMDR. NAJI JAMIL SOME MONTHS AGO HAD CHARGED WASFI WITH MESSAGE TO HIS BROTHER URGING HIM TO APPROACH IRAQIS WITH PROPOSAL FROM SARG THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD REVERT TO EVEN KEEL IF IRAQIS WOULD AGREE TO HAND OVER TO SYRIANS TWO RENEGADE BAATHIS FROM NATIONAL COMMAND WHO ALLEGEDLY ABSCONDED TO BAGHDAD IN LATE 1974 WITH SECRET DOCUMENTS. WASFI REPORTEDLY MADE NO HEADWAY WITH HIS BROTHER AND WAS JAILED WHEN HE RETURNED EMPTY-HANDED.

4. COMMENT: SARG, AND PRESIDENT ASAD IN PARTICULAR, HAVE NOT AS YET SAID ANYTHING PUBLICLY IN SUPPORT OF THESE MILITARY OFFICERS STATEMENTS, THOUGH ASAD'S OCT 6 SPEECH WOULD HAVE OFFERED FAVORABLE OCCASION TO DO SO. THERE HAVE BEEN NO RECENT PRESS ATTACKS ON IRAQ, HOWEVER, AND SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS ARE READING LATEST BAATH PARTY NATIONAL COMMAND STATEMENT CALLING FOR GREATER UNITY BETWEEN SYRIA, JORDAN, LEBANON AND PALESTINIANS (DAMASCUS 3891) AS IMPLICITY HOLDING DOOR OPEN TO IRAQ. REASONING IS THAT SYRIA'S OPPOSITION TO SINAI ACCORD AND PERCEIVED NEED TO STRENGTHEN "EASTERN FRONT" HAVE CREATED POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR SYRIAN-IRAQI RECONCILIATION.
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